LODI HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Incorporated October 20, 1988

LODI HISTORIAN

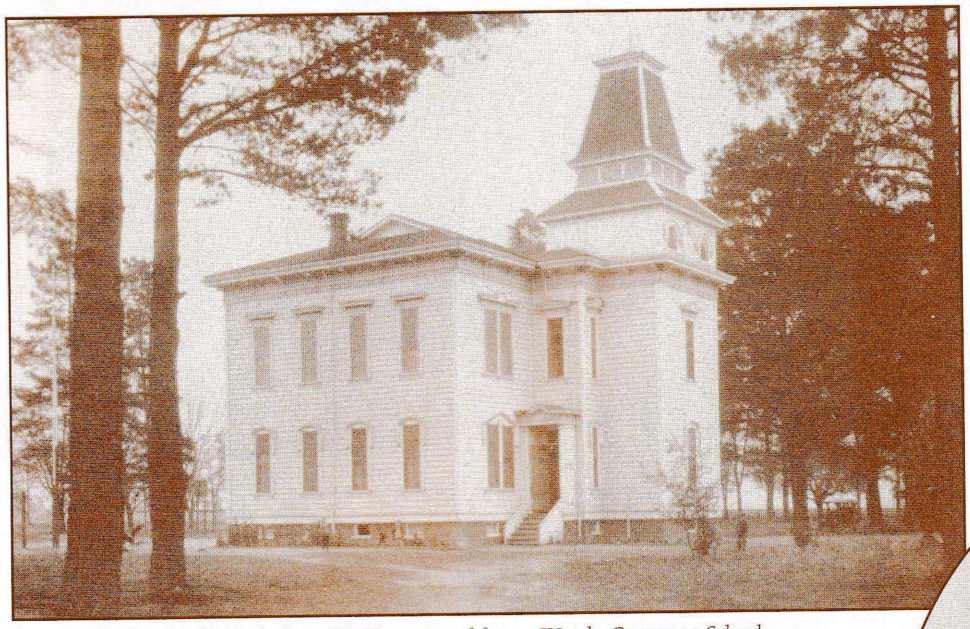
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1 WINTER 2004

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COLLEGE

by Ralph Lea & Janice Roth



Woodbridge College. Back row (l to r): Prof. Watthrope, G. B. Parker, Pres. Cowell, Prof. Millen, Prof. Ham, Miss Genrich, Miss N. Bolling, Ollie King, K. Baumgardner, G. Houskins, Alex Kelly, Miss L. Villinger, Miss E. Boyce, Miss L. Hughes, Miss J. Thornton, Miss Marie Cox, Miss Elsie Wilkinson, Miss Erma Woods, Fenton Ham, Will Broylen, Chas. Darr, Flanay Burkett, April Hutchins, Claude Van Gelder, Tom Bell, W. L. Blodgett, Maude King, Walter Garrison, S. G. Overholtzer, Miss Laura Houskens, Walter Jahant, H. J. Blewett, Leland Turner, "Charly Boy" George Creary, Miss Z. Cowell, Geo. Turner, A. Blewett, Bowers, Ora Broyles, Ed Keeney.



▲ *Woodbridge Academy, built in 1878 on site of future Woods Grammar School.*



Darvis Arrelian Mobley, President of San Joaquin Valley College, 1879 to 1891. ►

Woodbridge was the largest and most important settlement between Stockton and Sacramento in the 1860's and early 1870's. The main road between Stockton and Sacramento passed through the town. Woodbridge was also accessible by boat.

Early in the 1860's T.R. Burkett, owner of a meat market in Woodbridge, was talking to C. L. Newton about what they could do to improve the town. Building a high school was suggested. Judge Thompson appeared in the butcher shop and was drawn into the debate. He drew up a subscription list for a school fund that soon totaled $5000. Later James P. Folger agreed to obtain the cash money and over $8,000. was raised. Those that invested over $25. became voting members. The land was obtained from Albert S. Thomas and a two story building measuring 42'x64' was erected.

The so named Woodbridge Academy employed S. L. Morehead as teacher and principal for a five year term, but the school had trouble getting started. It wasn't until 1878 when the trustees, Dr. R. Bentley, E. G. Rutledge, John C. Thompson, Jacob Brack and Victor Jahant talked to J. A. Sollinger, teacher and member of the United Brethern Church of Woodbridge that things began to change. The board asked Sollinger if the UBC Church would take over the operations of the school. The church had just completed their own brick building at the corner of Indiana and Olive Streets for $2,700. Sollinger took the issue before the state Conference then meeting in town, they agreed to the plan and the school was established under their terms. The new Woodbridge Seminary was dedicated on September 10, 1879 and the following day school instruction began.

The Woodbridge Seminary was established with Darius A. Mobley, minister, as the first President (1879-1891) while W. H. Klinefelter and Eli Ridenour completed the staff. On September 10, 1879 the institution was dedicated by Bishop Castle.

The school was originally established as a preparatory school leading to college, but because of its growth it had expanded, by 1882, to offer some college level courses. There was no college nearby so in September of 1883 the decision was made to add a full college degree program. With four years of college studies a student could receive a bachelors degree in Arts, Philosophy or Science. A one year business course was later lengthened to three years as was the course for a teachers certificate. Music was also be offered. The preparatory classes were expanded to four years.

At the same time the name of the school was changed to San Joaquin Valley College. Thirty new subjects were taught plus weekly class drills in spelling, mental arithmetic, parsing and vocal music. President Darius A. Mobley, Profs. Ridenour and Klinefelter were the instructors. Mr. Snell conducted a class in bookkeeping, Miss Carrie Ellis taught instrumental music and Miss Essie Sawtelle held classes in drawing and painting.

There were 64 students enrolled in 1880. Two years later there were 74 students taking 27 different classes. Dr. Mobley taught 11, Prof. Ridenour 10 and Prof. Ellis taught 6 classes.

Miss Carrie C. Ellis was the first music teacher and she had to furnish her own instrument. H.B. Brown was the janitor and received a salary of $50 for the year plus a room, wood and oil. In May of 1885 the Advance

Literary Society was approved by the college trustees. Diplomas were given to W.O. Lowe, A.C. White, J.A. Snell and E.R. Thompson.

Marion Devries, Congressman and Judge, was one of the well-known students to graduate in 1886 along with Allie Thompson, Gussie Folger, Alvar Glenn, Marion Devries and James E.Z. Fowle. The 1887 graduates were Edith Field, Mattie Folger Chas A. Palmer and A.L. Walker.

The enrollment grew to over 175 students and was divided about equally between the collegiate and other departments. The cost for a full year ranged from $175-$200 including room-rent and board.

On May 23, 1887, French and German classes were added with S.S. Kinney as professor. Mrs. Keister was in charge of the Art Department. Miss Gussie Folger, a 1886 graduate and Miss Edith Field were employed at a salary of $100 each to give instruction and E. P. Morey was elected to teach in the business department.

In May of 1888, Miss Alice Gingrich was elected as head of Music Department. Ella Northrop, Bary Bently, W. S. Snedigar and C. W. Keen, Mary (Bentley) Morey, Camden Keen, Ella Northrup and W. S. Snedigar graduated from the college.

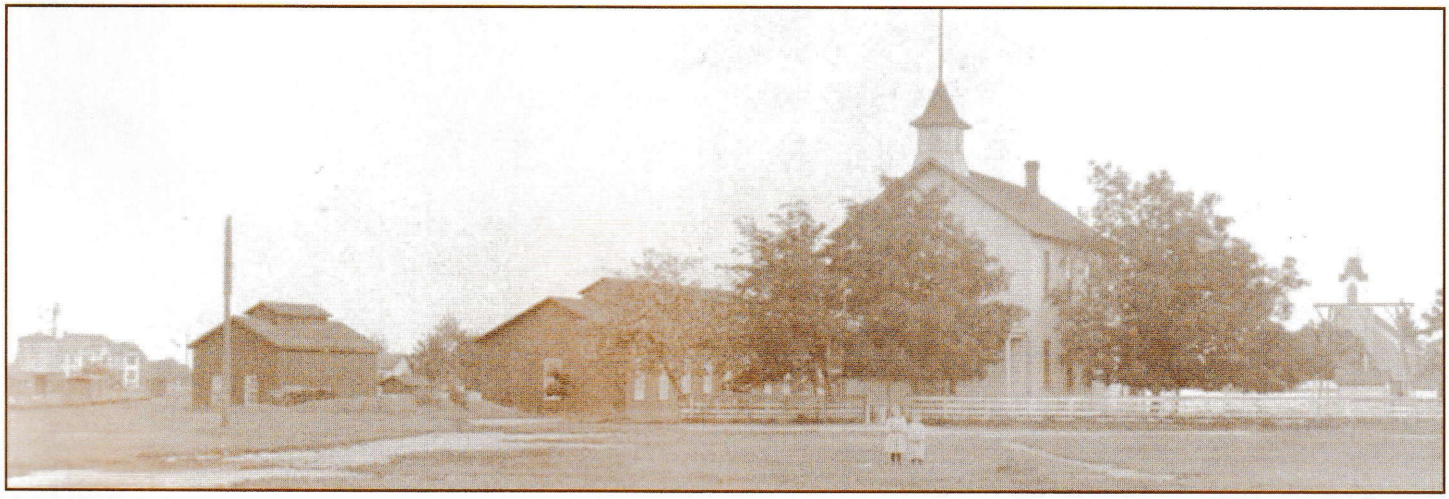


Woodbridge College, 1893. ▲

On June 3, 1889, W. S. Reese was elected as chair of Natural Science Department. Graduates that year were B. C. Bentley, Edith McMurtry, Jennie Jahant, S. N. McBride, Emma Smith, Mamie Sneidigar, John H. Thompson and completing the three year business course were Elmer Ganyon, N. D. Morey, H. Clary, George Emde, W. H. Thompson, Walter Myers and Verne Thornton.

The1890 graduates of 4 year college were Chas. Bryant, Susie Plummer, Mary Corell, Jennie Newton, James G. Huron, Ella Jahant, Helen Corell and L. Lou Hott. The faculty took turns conducting the devotional exercises at the college chapel during the year.

During 1891 the San Joaquin Valley College Association incorporated. Graduates that year included R. L. Beardslee, W. L. Blodgett and J. H. Wilms. A new Boarding Hall, a two



May 29, 1895: l to r: S.J.V.C. Boarding House, R.R. Round House (Valley Springs), Woods Grammar School and United Brethren Church. ▲

Celia Thompson Collection, Lodi Library



▲ *Woodbridge College, May 28, 1895. Miss Alice Gingrich beside her bicycle.*
Lodi Library Collection of Celia Thompson

"Nosce Te Ipsum."

FIFTH COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

San Joaquin Valley College,

Thursday Evening, June 6, 1889, 8 o'clock.

PROGRAM.

1. Overture, : : : Frank's Orchestra.
2. Invocation. : : : : : : :
3. Music, : : : : : Orchestra.
4. Oration, "Advancement in Sentiments of Justice" Samuel Nelson McBride.
5. Oration, : : "Language of the Pen," Jennie Jahant.
6. Vocal Solo, : : : : Selected, Mrs. A. M. Noble.
7. Essay, : : : "The Night for Stars," Emma W. Perrott.
8. Oration, : : : "Leveling Up," Benjamin Charles Bentley.
9. Music, : : : : : Orchestra.
10. Oration, : : : : "Half-tints," Edith Emde.
11. Oration, : "We, the Heirs of Former Ages," M. Anne Solinger.
12. Vocal Solo, : : : : Selected, Mrs. A. M. Noble.
13. Oration, : : : : "Our Utopia," John H. Thompson.
14. Presentation of Diplomas, : : :
15. Music, : : : : : Orchestra.
16. Benediction, : : : : : :

NO FLOWERS.

Christian Education Means National Prosperity.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE FALL TERM WILL BEGIN
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3D, 1889.

WINTER TERM BEGINS
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1889.

SPRING TERM BEGINS
TUESDAY, MARCH 12TH, 1889.

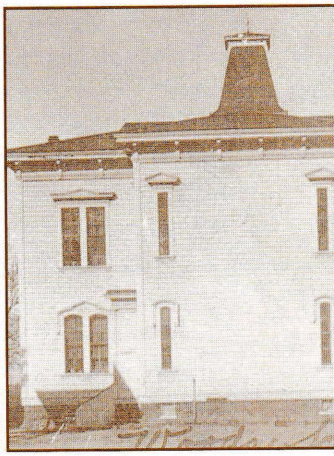
No Institution in the State offers better Courses of Study or more thorough Instruction

THAN THE

San Joaquin Valley College

Do not fail to ask for our new Catalogue and read the special inducements here offered.

Superior advantages for the study of the Ancient and Modern Languages, Philosophy, Mathematics, Art, Instrumental and Vocal Music, Book-keeping and Elocution. A Good Normal Course Pursued.



▲ *Back side of Woods School.*



story building with a basement, was completed in the spring of 1891 on the southeast corner of Carolina and Orange Streets. This was at the same time that Dr. Mobley resigned as President to return to church ministry in Pennsylvania. Before he moved his wife became ill and was unable to travel so he joined the faculty of Stockton High School. Professor J. G. Huber was selected as the new president of the San Joaquin Valley College.

The townspeople received many cultural benefits from having the college in their midst. Concerts, recitations, orations and lectures were held with the public invited. Woodbridge became affectionately known at the "Athens" of San Joaquin County and the local United Brethern Church became the "Mother Church" of the conference.

The moral atmosphere of Woodbridge and its strong temperance prevailed and students were advised to not visit Lodi, the sporting center. The seminary had a list of 36 rules for the students which included daily chapel and Sabbath Services and no profane language, liquor, tobacco, card games or dancing was allowed.

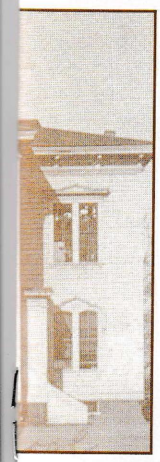
In a day when higher education for women was not stressed, Woodbridge College believed that the creator endowed women and men with

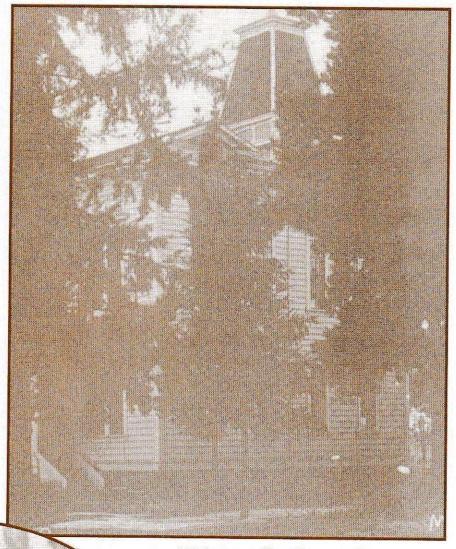


▲ *May 28, 1895: Woodbridge College (l to r): Mrs. Hunter and daughter, Prof and Mrs. W. J. Ham and daughter in front.*



▲ *San Joaquin Valley College Boarding House, Feb. 14, 1895. Prof. Waltrip (on porc Mattie Niorse, Soloman, football team, Mr. Allaray and son, and Mr. Blodgett.*





▲ *Old Woodbridge College, 1908.*



Woodbridge College, 1902; Knights of Pythians' picnic. ▲



◀ *Woodbridge College, Mar. 9, 1895*

equal intellectual powers and the best results would be secured when both sexes attended classes daily receiving instruction where all the privileges and honors were extended equally to all.

The college course of four years included classes in Latin, Science, History, Politics, Literature, Philosophy, Psychology and Bible Study. The three year Business Course covered Buying, Selling, Banking and how to be in charge of a business. The teachers course prepared one for a teaching career and the Music Department offered four years of instruction in Voice, Piano and the various instruments.

The yearly enrollment reached a high of over 180 students divided equally between collegiate and other departments.

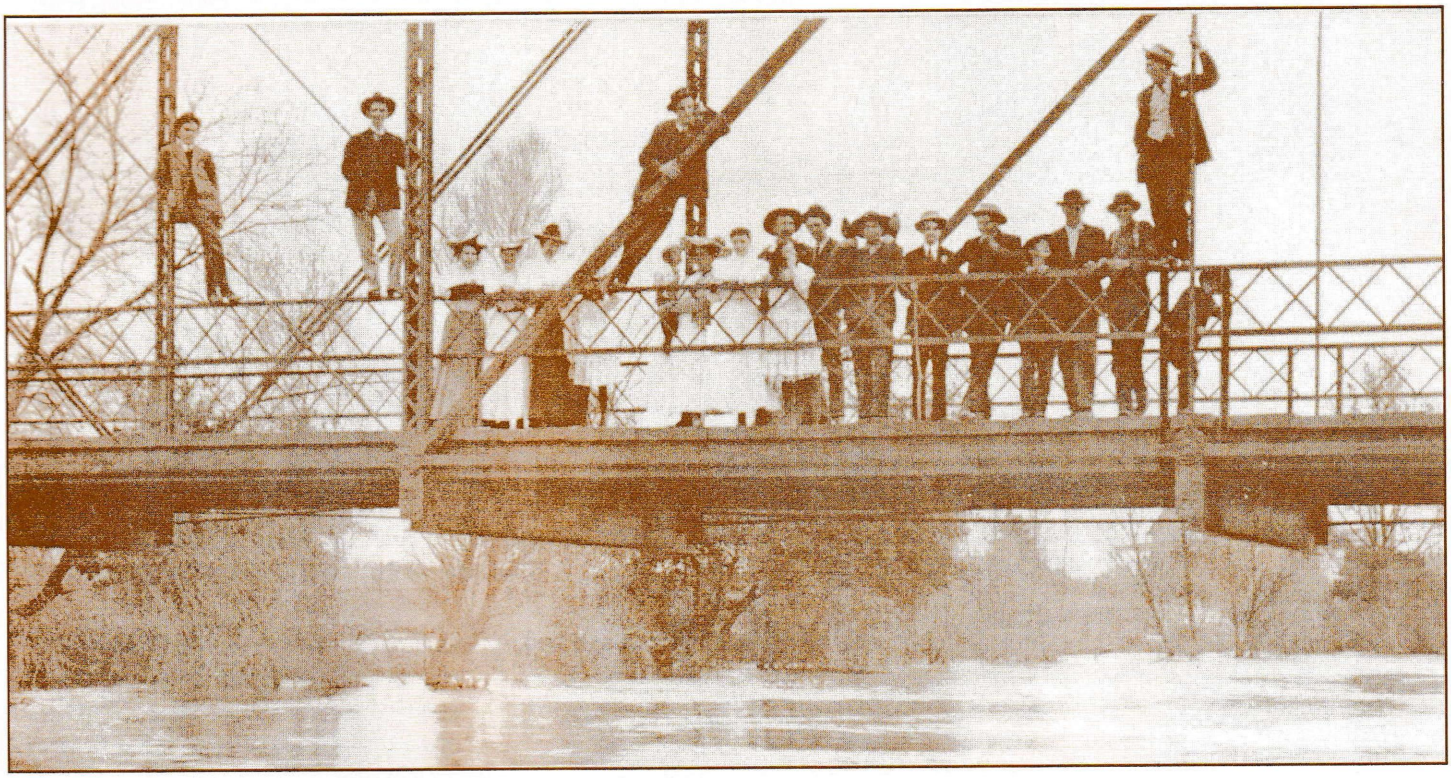
With the upgrading of courses to a full college, the name was changed



Maude King,



San Joaquin Valley College, Woodbridge football team, Feb. 14, 1895. Top row (l to r): Homer Bustner, Fenton Ham, ▲ *Middle row (l to r): Walter Garrison, Frank Ralls, Walter Meyers, Soloman Blodgett, Arthur Thomas. Bottom row: Ed Van Vranken, Louis Powers, Will Thomas, Ray Powers, Humbert McClelland, Geo. Rutledge, and Lonnie Rhodes.*



▲ *Woodbridge Academy students on Mokelumne River Bridge at Woodbridge.*

to San Joaquin Valley College and the association received a deed for the property from the original Woodbridge trustees.

The tuition charges for students in the early 1890's varied from $15-$25 for a term. Rooms were furnished for $3.50 to $4.00 per month and board was $3.00 per week.

On June 2, 1892 Mark Keppel of Biggs, and John H. Francis and Alfred L Cowell of Woodbridge graduated from the college. Professor W.J. Ham, Rev. J. W. Munden, Rev. M. D. A. Steen and Rev. J. G. Wright were all on college advisory Board that named President Huber's salary of $1000 and Professors Ridenour, Ham and Francis salary at $900 a year. Charles Bisset was the janitor at $85 for the year and Rev. J. W. Baumgartner was the Steward of the boarding hall.

On May 24, 1893 the college graduates were Amy Keen, Ph.B., Lorah Boyce, B.S., Estella Smith, B.S., Frank W. Beckman, B.S., Grace Bangs and Mable McMurtry received degrees in Music and Fred Johnson, Wm. Krause, Carson J. Long, Chas W. Northrup, Fenton Ham, Geo. L. Francis and A. O. Eddlemon all graduated from the business department.

In 1893 Professor W. J. Ham became president with a staff of E. H. Ridenour, J. H. Francis, Mark Keppel, Alice Fingrich and C. B. Newton.

The graduating class of 1894 consisted of Wm. G. Fisher, B.A., Mable McMurtry, Ph.B., Chas. Bisset, Ph.D., Amy Keen received a music degree and Walter Garrison, Geo. Scott and Solomon Blodgett received a degree from the three year business department.

In May of 1895, A. L. Cowell became President of the college, W. J. Ham and T. A. Waltrip were Professors, A. K. Gingrich taught music and Ivy Wilkinson also taught that year.

The graduates for the year were Ethel May Schomp with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree, Mary Elizabeth Nicewonger with a Bachelor of Science degree, John M. Hench and Walter Garrison received a Business degree while three masters degrees went to graduates A. L. Cowell, J. H. Francis and Mark Keppel.

In May of 1896, graduates Clarence T. Williams, B.A., Grant Overholzer and Elsie May Wilkinson, B.S., Lillian Harsner, Bachelor of Music, Leland Turner, Geo. R. Turner and C. M. Darr received diplomas in business.

Financial support of the school did not improve and serious maintenance problems developed. The church conference had its own problems and struggled with a reduced congregation.

A final and fatal blow to the college was the rapid escalation of the tuition fee and the birth of the tax-supported high school system. By 1894 Stockton had a tax-supported four year high school. Two years later Lodi started a high school program that was tuition-free.

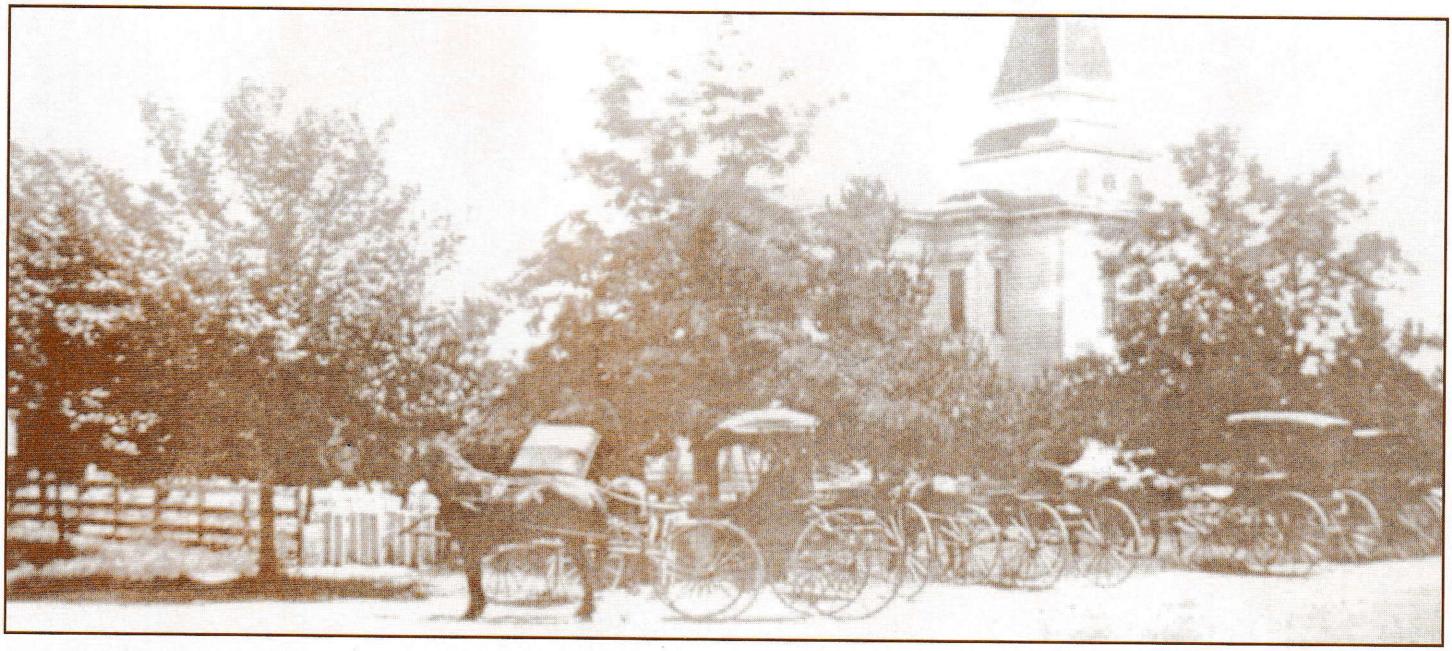
With only one graduate in 1897, Maude King became the last graduate of the San Joaquin Valley College in Woodbridge. The college trustees voted to return the property to the original owners. The following year the $41.00 in taxes were not paid.



Woodbridge Grammar School using the old college building, c. 1915. ▲

The Woods Grammar School started using the building and in 1903 the academy and its land was auctioned off. Frank Perrott had a high bid of $199.25 but the trustees elected to sell the property to the school district for $10.00 in gold. The Woodbridge Grammar School used the building until 1922 when it was torn down to make room for a new school building.

The closing of the San Joaquin Valley College was a time of great sadness for those involved with the school and the entire Woodbridge Community. They could look back



Courtesy of the San Joaquin County Historical Society

San Joaquin Valley College. ▲

with pride however, on the education and moral leadership to all the young people who became teachers, business leaders, politicians and better citizens because of the school.

On May 19, 1956 the Northern San Joaquin County Historical Society dedicated California State Landmark Status to the site with a brass plaque noting the dates of the seminary and college honoring the memory of the dedicated teachers and students who made everyone proud to have been part of such a worthy undertaking.



Old Woodbridge College, March 1922. ▲

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REFERENCES & CREDITS

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Stockton Record, February 14, 1912

Lodi Times, September 18, 1952

Lodi New Sentinel, September 18, 1950